

Site: M:26/10/73

Johnston House

Built: 1913

307 West Montgomery Avenue

Builder: Charles Viett, Jr.

Private

The Johnston House is an eclectic mixture of elements from several architectural styles. The broad horizontal emphasis of the Prairie style combined with decorative classical motifs creates a large, 2-1/2 story transitional frame residence. It was constructed on speculation in 1913 and sold to Alexander Garrett four years later.

Maryland Historical Trust

State Historic Sites Inventory Form

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic

and/or common The Johnston House

2. Location

street & number 307 West Montgomery Avenue

☐ not for publication

city, town Rockville

☐ vicinity of

congressional district 8

state Maryland

county Montgomery (RV Planning Area 4)

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Margaret Johnston

street & number 307 West Montgomery Avenue

telephone no.: 762-3362

city, town Rockville

state and zip code

Maryland 20850

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Montgomery Co. Land Records liber 5508

street & number Montgomery Co. Courthouse folio 10

city, town Rockville state Maryland

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title National Register of Historic Places (1974)

date City of Rockville Historic District (1974) ☒ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☒ local

depository for survey records City of Rockville

city, town Rockville

state

Maryland

7. Description

Survey No. M:26/10/73

Condition

☐ excellent
☒ good
☐ fair

Check one

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date of move _____

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The subject house faces south on West Montgomery Avenue on a deep, well maintained lot landscaped with mature trees, shrubs, and flower beds. A 15' alley right of way at the rear provides an access drive from Forest Avenue. A gable roofed, vertical wood-sided double garage, constructed in 1983, sits on the northwest corner.

This large, early 20th Century frame 2-1/2 story, three bay by three bay square house with one story front and two story rear porches sits on a brick foundation. It has a moderately pitched composition shingled hipped roof, broken by dormers or gabled bays on all sides. The exterior finish is stucco except for aluminum siding on a 1979 front porch enclosure and adjoining 1981 office addition. It has one central brick chimney, now stuccoed with a concrete convex mansard cap.

In form, the house is an eclectic transitional early 20th century structure. Its appearance with the recent side additions and smooth stucco exterior emphasizes the horizontal rooflines, creating a modern broad, low, profile. It also displays stylistic elements of Prairie architecture: deep upturned eaves, wide frieze, asymmetry of door, window, bay, and dormer placement, and square two window dormers. The use of Doric porch columns, pedimented entry bay, and transomed and side-lighted entry door are early 20th Century colonial and classical revival elements. It does, however, retain the Queen Anne preference for an undulating and broken facade sectioned by exterior surface variation in its one and two-story bays, decorative shingling on gables and dormers, and irregular roof line. Window and door surrounds have been built out with moulding strips from the stucco, indicating that it was applied over an original siding. As built, shingle and siding variations on the exterior probably gave this house a more Victorian transitional look.

The front and rear porches are set on brick piers infilled with lattice panels. With a few exceptions, windows are double hung sash 1/1 with broad plain surrounds built out with moulding strips, and lintels which are applied over the 12 inch cornice on the second story; most have wooden louvered shutters. Small inset cellar windows have four muntins.

The asymmetric three bay south (front) facade has a four bay, one story porch extending one bay east and wrapping around the east facade. It is reached by six wooden steps flanked by two wrought iron railings. The low-hipped roof is broken by a pedimented west entry bay and is supported by seven large Doric columns, paired at the entrance,

continued on attachment 7.1

8. Significance

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Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1913. **Builder/Architect** Charles Viett, Jr. (B) **local history**

check: Applicable Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

Significance

The Johnston House is a distinctive and eclectic example of the spacious residences erected by local builders in this desirable West End neighborhood.

History and Support

By 1890, the formerly large Julius West estate had been reduced to a five acre tract owned by his widow. This parcel was bracketed by the newly subdivided Beall lands on the east, and by the old West land, platted as "West End Park", on the west and north. By the turn of the century the three large lots fronting on the main road had been sold, but were improved only by a neighborhood tennis court. 1/

In 1911 Charles Viett, Jr., a local builder and contractor, purchased the middle lot and erected the present house on speculation. 2/ The house is a blend of several architectural styles and motifs. Its asymmetrical mass has decorative gables with shaped shingling on three sides and shallow bay windows of the late Victorian styles. Its full width, columned porch decorated with pedimented entrance, side-lit entry and hipped dormer are Colonial Revival features. Elements of the new Prairie style are evident in its exaggerated overhang, its continuous molded cornice and the broad horizontal lines which balance the mass. The house and its contemporary neighbor, "Welsh's Folly", built the same year, complement each other in scale and style. 3/

Mr. Viett continued his attention to fine craftsmanship in the interior woodwork and detailing, but found himself in financial difficulties and without a buyer for the house. According to Garrett family sources, Mr. Viett sold the house to Alexander Garrett for the bargain price of \$3,000 in 1917. 4/ Mr. Garrett, with his wife, Mary Gaither Garrett, was retiring from the active management of their large farm near Hunting Hill. In 1928 the widowed Mrs. Garrett sold the house to Alvin N. Bastable of Baltimore.

continued on attachment 8.1

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10. Geographical Data

Quadrangle scale _____

H

11. Form Prepared By

city or town Rockville state Maryland 20850

PS-2746

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The Johnston House
Attachment 7.1

with a plain balustrade. A rectangular entry vestibule is formed from three 12 light panels separated on the front by a four light panel accessed by a door on the east. The main exterior door with side lights and large transom is in the vestibule. The east porch bay has been enclosed with wood siding and has large three panel casement windows on the south and east sides. A recessed addition with 3-panel casement and door accessed by five steps with wrought iron railings continues the enclosure.

A three window bay, topped with a projecting fish-scale shingled gable pierced by rectangular light, is centered in the west bay, second story; there are two evenly spaced windows to the east. A hipped-roof two window dormer with shingled sides is set above the east windows. Another three window bay is in the east bay, first story.

The two-bay east facade main block has one window, second story, south bay, and a three sided, two story projecting bay, gabled and finished as the front second story bay, occupies the north bay.

The north (rear) facade is dominated by a two story, shed roofed porch, screen enclosed on the second story, and 2/3 screened east, 1/3 stuccoed with one centered window west on the first story. The main block has a modern picture window (large single light flanked by narrow side lights) on the east, one narrow light being enclosed in the first story screen porch which also encloses a shuttered window and exterior door. The second story mainblock has one window in the porch right, and an exterior door. A fish-scale shingled dormer with shed roof and a pair of 1/1 double sash windows is centered on the rear hip. A ballasted two door cellar entrance is in the foundation beneath the picture window.

The four bay west facade has two windows aligned on the 1st and 2nd stories, north bay, one slightly lower stair light window north center bay, and one window in the second story south bay. A corbelled square oriel bay with an oval rosette leaded glass window on the south and a double casement leaded glass diamond pane window on the west between stories in the south center bay. A gabled, three window dormer with shingle siding is centered on the roof. Two cellar windows are in the foundation.

continued on 7.2

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Attachment 7.2

Interior:

The interior woodwork is of dark stained pine; doors and windows have classical cornice moulding trim. The large entrance foyer has a side staircase with a square balustrade divided by four larger posts with Doric capitals and panelled insets. The main staircase has a panelled dado along the side wall. A central brick fireplace stands in the entrance room with a wood mantelpiece and three-inch square red tiled hearth. The paneling and post motif is repeated in the large openings between rooms.

Overall, there are 11 rooms in the main house, excluding additions. Irregularly shaped rooms on the second floor are entered from the center hall. Access to the second story screened porch is through the two north side bedrooms. Interior modifications were made in 1979 in the 1st floor kitchen, pantry, and under stairs to add work space, storage, and bathroom facilities. A bathroom and linen closet were added on the second story.

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Alvin Bastable was President of the Union Stockyard Company of Baltimore and allied by marriage to both the Griffith and Veirs families of Montgomery County. The Bastable home was the center of many social occasions as Rockville became the summer or permanent residence of many of the nation's commercial, political, and social elite, drawn to the the Washington area by the booming economy of the 1920's and attracted to Rockville as a convenient residential suburb. Adjacent Bastable neighbors were the heiress to a Pennsylvania oil fortune married to one of the Dawsons, and a member of the duPont family.

In 1950 the house was sold to Francis Edgar and Margaret Johnston. 5/ Dr. Johnston, a professor of mathematics at George Washington University, died in 1978. Margaret Johnston is a psychologist with offices in her home. She has enlarged the rear of the home for office space, and enclosed the east side of the front porch, but has otherwise preserved the features of this comfortable home. 6/

Footnotes:

1. Montgomery County Tax Assessments and Plats, Montgomery County Historical Society Plat No. 22i and 1890 Anderson Survey.
2. Montgomery County Land Records 218/198
3. See Survey Site for 301 W.Montgomery Ave. MHT# M:26/10/47
4. Interview with Mary Margaret Garrett Abert Feb., 1986.
5. Land Records, op. cit., 1463/553 (1950)
6. Interviews with Mrs. Johnston, March, 1985, and newspaper

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307 West Montgomery
1913 - 1914
Oriel Window west facade
photo: Pat D'Angelo
Sp 8 1985

307 West Montgomery
Oriel window
West facade

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307 West Montgomery Ave.
1913 - 1914
south (front) elevation
photo: Pat D'Angelo
Spr 1985

307 W MONTGOMERY
FRONT (SOUTH)

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The Johnston House

Attachment 8.2

Montgomery County Plat 22I showing 307 West Montgomery Avenue



22i
(undated)

(undated)

City of Rockville
scale: 1"= 600'

1982

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4

Johnston House

307 W. Montgomery Ave.





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